

A Fundamental Klan Doctrine



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THE various agencies, that have been opposing the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in so many ways, have endeavored to create the impression that the order is engaged in preaching and exemplifying a doctrine of hate. It is not the purpose of the writer to enter into a controversy with these antagonists. Neither is it his intention to indite a categorical denial of the accusation. He believes that careful consideration will be given by all fair-minded persons to a presentation of the Klan's true doctrine, and he is also persuaded that time and evidence will convince the unprejudiced of the true teaching and spirit of the Klan. Ours is not a message of hate, neither is the Klan engaged in the task of engendering strife or arousing enmities of any kind.

When jangling voices are hushed and the clamor of intolerant opposition is stilled, so that the Klan can have an uninterrupted hearing, its true message will be heard and its true mission will be understood by those persons who really desire to be informed. When rightly comprehended by those to whom it may rightfully make appeal, the Klan will win merited appreciation as a beneficent factor in the life of America. It will gain this approving appraisement because of its positive contribution to all that is right, and just, and good, in all phases of American life. An evil association teaching a doctrine of hate, and addressing itself to the task of generating bigotry and strife, has no place in America and should not be permitted to exist. If this were the message and mission of the Klan, it should be destroyed. And every true Klansman, who is a real Christian patriot, would aid in its destruction.

But the mission of the Klan is harmony, and the message of the Klan is love. The Klan is seeking an opportunity to co-operate in the harmonizing of all the congenial elements that are truly American. The Klan would aid in bringing all possible concord out of the discord that obtains among the dissimilar groups and interests that constitute this country. And the Klan would welcome the opportunity to make known its true doctrine and to fulfill its real mission. Let me re-affirm the fact that the fundamental doctrine of

the Klan is love. This doctrine we are endeavoring to teach and exemplify among all true Klansmen. And we would make it known among all men, however diverse they may be in race or creed or character.

Some Misconceptions

IT WILL be well for us to eliminate some popular misconceptions of love, before we present the Klan concept and the Klan teaching. Neither the spirit nor the message of Klankraft is to be interpreted in accord with the common prevailing notions of love. For example, love is often fancied to be a sickly, sentimental, neurotic feeling, that has no place among real men. But this is love's caricature, which does not, in any way, portray the highest and noblest disposition possible to all real men.

Love is sometimes confused with easiness of temper, or with a complacent attitude toward persons and things, or with tolerance, or with mere charitableness. Good humor is not to be frowned upon, complacency is not to be condemned, toleration is not to be deprecated, charitableness is not to be censured, but these excellent traits are to be distinguished from love. Love is sometimes regarded as a mere emotion exhausting itself in its own ecstatic demonstrations. Love may be attended by emotion; but emotion is not to be mistaken for love.

Love is the supreme trait in human character; the crowning grace of true, noble manhood; the trait that gives tone to moral being; the keynote to which all moral being should attune itself; and love should be the ruling principle of human life.

Meaning

IN ORDER to interpret intelligibly the Klan doctrine of love, it becomes necessary to emphasize its essential elements.

The first may be called benevolence. Love in its benevolent aspect is desire for the good of others, producing a disposition to be of aid to them in realizing their highest good. Or we may state it in another way; Love in its benevolent aspect is unselfish regard for others and desire to do them good. But this is merely passive. Neither the disposition nor the desire may issue in the accomplishment of the good of others. Love must go further than this.

So we emphasize the second aspect, which we call the beneficent. Love in its beneficent aspect

not only desires the good of others, but the desire shapes itself in earnest endeavor to promote the well-being of others. The benevolent must issue in the beneficent; desire must become operative in action, actively seeking to do good to and for men; for there can be no true love for others except it be followed by service. He who loves will serve, will render willing, active, self-sacrificing service. In this way, love becomes practical. I am reminded here of an incident of recent occurrence. A Klansman, in official position, grievously wronged a brother Klansman during a period of heated controversy. Trouble came upon the first Klansman, who is also the victim of a weakness that has become a disease. The injured Klansman, not rejoicing in the downfall of the injurer, visited him in his trouble and made actual provision for his relief and for his possible recovery from his overmastering weakness. That is practical love manifesting itself in unselfish, holy helpfulness. It is translating the Klan motto *non silba sed anthar* into living, flaming, unselfish devotion to the good of another. It is a fine exemplification of the Klan doctrine toward an erring Klansman. And this is the doctrine enunciated by the Klan, a doctrine of practical love which manifests itself in service.

The Life of Love

THE true Klan doctrine insists upon these two aspects of love as the very sum and essence of life for real men and true Klansmen. It is indispensable for individual and for national life, for character and for service, for the earthly life and for the life to come. This being true, the problem confronting us is the problem of learning to live the life of genuine, intelligent, thoroughgoing, active, practical love. When this lesson has been learned, men and Klansmen will have learned to live the highest life, the life of love. There is no other alternative, for individual, national, and racial history has fully demonstrated that the selfish, self-centered, unloving life is a suicidal life.

Application of the Doctrine

ANY expression of this supremest characteristic in man must necessarily take into account its relation to God himself. It is the response of the highest in man to the highest in all the universe, the Almighty God, who is love. This is fundamental, because man can come into right relation with men only through this right relationship

with God. Except there be love for God as the basis, the motive, and the power, there can be no love for man. In accord with our two-fold definition, love for God means our burning desire for His person, His will and His glory, and our unselfish devotion to Him and that which is His. God first in every Klansman's life, and he is then prepared to enter into and maintain all other relations as a true Klansman should, in keeping with this law of love. The manifestation of love to God, must always be through worship and service. He claims these, and true Klansmen must respond to His claims.

This same principle applies to the Klansman's domestic relationships. The home as an institution is fundamentally necessary to the well-being and development of the nation. The normal American home is one of the secrets of our country's greatness. This fact needs to be emphasized today when there seems to be a breaking down of home life. In this statement, it will be impossible to give consideration to causes and indications. We can only point out the apparent condition, in order to stress the fact that the Klan stands for the application of this doctrine of love to the family life and in the homes of the nation. We need to build the best homes, and to this end it will be necessary for every member of every family to desire and seek to do what is best for that particular home. Displays of affection among members of families are always befitting, but the devotion of every one's best thoughts and endeavors to the upbuilding of a wonderful home is an imperative duty, if that home is to function effectively in its place and in all its relations.

This principle is also applicable to the Klansman's relationship to his country. It is expressed in the terms of, "a devoted patriotism to our country and its government." The Klansman is taught that it is his duty to, "be patriotic toward our country." It is impressed upon him that one of the paramount purposes of this order is to, "exemplify a pure patriotism toward our country." "At the sacred altar of the Klan," he is solemnly dedicated, "to the holy service of our country." Relating these ritualistic statements to our definition, love for country means fervent love for our country's best interests, and unselfish devotion to the attainment of her welfare. Every patriot is a promoter of his country's good. He will labor for his country's improvement and for the main-

enance of good government. He will set an example of obedience to law, and in upholding her institutions. He will defend his country against all destructive forces and disruptive elements. Believing that the preservation and perpetuation of our free institutions depends upon an enlightened electorate, he will be zealous in promoting and safe-guarding his country's public school system. He will encourage every legitimate means for the betterment of his fellow-citizens, morally, mentally, socially, and in every way. We are constrained to insist there is nationwide need today of such whole-hearted, intelligent dedication to our country's interests, as is indicated here. If the Klan can but point the way to such love of country, as the times demands, the Klan will have justified its existence.

Klansmen are to make real this principle in their own fraternal relationships. When we voluntarily entered Klandom, we came into a Realm of special relations and special duties. Fraternal love became the bond of union. Klansmen committed themselves to the practice of "Klannishness toward fellow-Klansmen." By this commitment, they agreed to treat one another as brothers. Anything below this standard will fail to exemplify the spirit of Klankraft. Among Klansmen, brotherhood must be more than a mere profession and fellowship more than a mere sentiment. Wherever there is need for loving service, a Klansman must go speedily to help that distressed Klansman. Klankraft loses its fraternal value if Klansmen do not make right use of it for the benefit of those who need the loving service that can be rendered by a true Klansman. One Klansman is weak; it is a privilege to strengthen him. Another Klansman has fallen; it is a privilege to restore him. A Klansman is in danger; it is a privilege to safeguard him. A Klansman is jeopardized; it is a privilege to protect him. A Klansman is seeking to rise; it is a privilege to assist him. If a Klansman be true to Klankraft, he must learn to give a helping and lifting hand to those who need it. Our fellow Klansmen should be able to know that our regard for them is genuine, that our motives are pure, and our responsiveness is assured. They should be able to trust us, and not be fearful that their trust will be betrayed; they should be able to confide in us, and feel assured that their confidence will be kept sacred and inviolate. It is a sad thing if those

bound in the sacred bonds of Klankraft cannot be dependable. This principle at work in the Klans will mean that every Klansman will do his own work, unselfishly, devotedly, and in full-hearted co-operation with all the other Klansmen. The relation of every Klansman to other Klansmen should be harmonious. They will thus serve and work, "in one accord." But, we have no right to expect from other Klansmen that we have not given to them. To seek to capitalize Klankraft for ourselves, and not to invest ourselves for Klankraft, excludes us from any claim upon Klankraft in any time of our necessity. There should be but one law of promotion in Klandom: He who loves most serves most; he who serves most shall be first. This lesson of love is not only opportune at this time, but is suitable at all times. May the unseen Head of the Klan enable us to learn it.

This principle has a philanthropic application. What shall be the attitude of the Klan toward those who are not of us, and those who are against us? There can be but one answer, and that is to love them. This is the mandate of the Master and the doctrine of the Klan. We can desire their good, and, when we may be permitted, can contribute to their well-being as far as is consistent with the general good and the principles for which we stand. Even those elements in our country who oppose us most bitterly are not to receive hate in return, for hatred is inconsistent with the doctrine we are enunciating. We will defend ourselves against their attacks; but as we continue to grow, and work, and extend our influence, in the face of all opposition, we will return our good for their evil in such service as will protect them in their constitutional rights and will make for their highest good. This announcement of attitude takes into account all boundaries ordained by all law and order and right. Beyond this no true Klansman can go. And in this, we are obedient to the law of love.

As the closing word in this statement, let it be impressed, that to this chivalry nobler than any knighthood conferred by human hands, the Klan has dedicated itself. In keeping with the spirit of Klankraft, the true Klansman lives and works and serves, "not for self, but for others."